



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION**

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**Testimony of Linda J. Cimino  
Director, Office of Victim Services, Judicial Branch  
Public Health Committee Public Hearing  
February 4, 2019**

**S.B. 796, An Act Concerning Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners**

Good Morning Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, Senator Somers, Representative Petit and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Linda Cimino, Director of Victim Services for the Judicial Branch, and I am here today to speak in support of **S.B. 796, *An Act Concerning Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners***. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you on this legislation. I would also like to thank the Department of Public Health and the Connecticut Hospital Association for working with us to craft the language before you.

This proposal seeks to expand the current Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) Training Program so that victims of sexual assault have greater access to a trained sexual assault forensic examiner. Under current law, the Office of Victim Services contracts with sexual assault forensic examiners who respond to eight participating hospitals to provide skilled medical-forensic examinations and evidence collection, when a victim of sexual assault presents at the hospital.

In non-participating hospitals, victims often have to wait for hours for a medical-forensic examination and the collection of evidence. Also, victims of sexual assault who present at a non-participating hospital will most likely receive care by a non-trained health

care provider. This results in victims of sexual assault not receiving the trauma informed care that a sexual assault forensic examiner is able to provide.

More specifically, Section 1 establishes a standing Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee to recommend policies and procedures regarding the SAFE Training program to the Office of Victim Services, with the goal of ensuring statewide consistency in the examination and evidence collection of victims of sexual assault.

Section 2 adds a definition of sexual assault forensic examiner and a definition of health care facility as used in this section of the statutes to clarify who may use the term SAFE and where such examinations and evidence collection takes place.

Section 3 conforms 19a-112g of the Connecticut General Statutes to the existing practice of SAFE practitioners being trained by the Office of Victim Services. The Department of Public Health currently does not have a role in this training.

Section 4 clarifies that the Office of Victim Services may provide training to certain practitioners in all health care facilities to ensure consistency in training statewide. Section 5 allows the Chief Court Administrator to prescribe policies and procedures to implement this legislation, should it be enacted into law.

Section 6 repeals the statute that established the Sexual Assault Advisory Committee that was disbanded in 2013.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and I would be happy to answer any question you may have.